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PRESS RELEASE

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ADA Inspectors Catch Over 1 Million Dollars at Border **Special training allows agricultural inspectors to spot organized crime activities**

(Sanders, AZ) -- On Monday, June 18, 2007, two Arizona Department of Agriculture (ADA) port inspectors caught individuals trying to smuggle \$ \$1,011,630.00 in U.S. currency in a commercial truck-tractor and box trailer during a routine agricultural inspection at the Sanders Port of Entry inspection station on Interstate 40.

At approximately 0645 hours, a commercial truck unit owned by the JCLL Trucking Company, pulled into Sanders Port of Entry on Interstate 40 westbound, near Milepost 340. The truck was hauling produce which required an inspection by the Arizona Department of Agriculture. There was a driver and two passengers located within the tractor.

Inspectors from the Plant Services Division of ADA conducted a thorough inspection of the load which was a mixture of watermelons and onions along with the paperwork accompany the load. The ADA Inspectors noticed several indicators that led them to be suspicious of the shipment. Rotting produce and inconsistent stories from the driver about the origin of the produce immediately tipped off inspectors that something was not right. Additionally, the ADA Inspectors observed that the tire rack under the trailer had a brand new spare tire secured with an unusually large padlock.

As a result, the inspectors checked the driver's information through Motor Vehicle Division who found that the insurance was expired and immediately called DPS due to the suspicious activity.

After the arrival of the DPS and their inspection of the truck, trailer and interview of the occupants, they found \$10,000 in cash located in the passenger section of the tractor. At the urging of the ADA inspectors, DPS examined the spare tire, which upon prying open was found to have \$1,001,630 in U.S. Currency.

The inspectors were able to spot the tire because of the training they received at the "Desert Snow" training course. Each ADA port inspector receives the three day Highway Criminal Interdiction and Anti-Terrorism Training so that they are trained in methods of concealment frequently used in the drug trade and possible terrorist activities. Although the main objective of ADA's port inspectors is to ensure that agricultural products

are safe for Arizona consumers and pest free, due to their strategic location and with the training they receive, they are also able to recognize indicators for organized criminal activities.

The three occupants of the truck were taken into custody by DPS officers, interviewed further and later released as the investigation will determine if there are going to be any formal charges against any or all three. The truck-tractor and trailer unit, identified as a 1997 Peterbilt and 1994 Box Trailer, were seized and the produce load will be removed and submitted for destruction because of the deteriorating condition caused by the rotting. The investigation is continuing.

It is believed from the initial stages of the investigation that the large amount of currency resulted from proceeds from an illegally conducted enterprise and the shipment was headed back to the criminal organization.

The skill demonstrated by the ADA Inspectors and DPS Officers demonstrates the common sense cooperative commitment of state agencies in addressing the problems of organized crime.

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